

Re: news article on WA FCR revisions

Marylou Soscia to: Matthew Szelag

06/19/2012 12:41 PM

Cc: Adrienne Allen, Angela Chung, Christine Psyk, Jill Nogi, Lisa Macchio, Maja Tritt, Mike Bussell, William Beckwith

I assume everyone saw these two additional articles:

[Lots of fish, lots of toxins; officials looking to change that](#)

Yakima Herald-Republic

Yakama tribal member Alan Tahsequah spends each spring and summer along the banks of the Yakima and **Columbia rivers**, catching fish for his family.

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Confederated Umatilla Journal - June 2012

<http://www.umatilla.nsn.us/june%20cu%202012%20b.pdf>

<http://www.umatilla.nsn.us/june%20cuj%202012%20b.pdf> - Windows Internet Explorer

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CUJ Op-Ed

The Columbia River's worrisome

By The Oregonian Editorial Board

Five years ago, scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey found the muck at the bottom of Portland rivers and creeks laced with the chemicals of everyday life: caffeine, pesticides, antidepressants and heartburn medications.

Nobody got too alarmed, however, because nobody knew if people would be harmed, even though the reproductive and survival instincts of fish might be.

Now the same agency, in collaboration with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and others, has found the river of this region's destiny - the Columbia - to carry dozens of toxic substances from the outflows of sewage treatment facilities and municipal stormwater runoff pipes.

And again, there's no immediate reason for alarm, because nobody can really say that flame retardant or a steroid diluted in a voluminous waterway will end up hurting anyone.

But this latest USGS survey is on a broader scale - river samples were taken all the way from Wenatchee and Richland downriver to Portland and Longview - and its findings are unsettling: High mercury concentrations at The Dalles and off Vancouver.

The anti-seizure medicine carbamazepine and the over-the-counter antihistamine diphenhydramine throughout Galaxolide, serially named as the synthetic fragrance in air fresheners but known to affect estrogen levels, everywhere. And of 49 manmade chemicals, among them cancer-causing PCBs, 45 within the Portland Harbor Superfund area alone, with PCBs at up to 300 times the concentrations found elsewhere.

'Good information' needed before DOE

By DON BRUNKILL
Snoey Lake-Gummar Courier-Herald Business Columnist

When the Environmental Protection Agency was formed in 1970, our environmental problems were easy to see: factories belched black smoke, leaded gasoline fouled our air and water and rivers were so polluted they actually caught fire.

Today, 42 years later, much has been accomplished. Our air is clearer, our rivers are cleaner and aquatic life is thriving in our streams and estuaries.

We have made so much progress that the remaining issues are literally microscopic, measured in parts per trillion. Today, science is the key to establishing if a problem exists and how to respond.

However, the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) seems to want to move forward without it.

Recently, the DOE announced it wants to raise water quality standards in order to protect people who eat a lot of fish. Their thinking is that water-borne contaminants accumulate in fish, so the agency should set standards that protect those who eat the most fish.

DOE says it has survey summaries that justify its proposed standard, but the agency does not have the actual data. Dr. Lawrence McCrone, one of the state's leading toxicologists, told DOE that's not good enough.

"For data that are to have such far-reaching and costly ramifications, I believe that a true assessment of the scientific defensibility of the surveys can only be concluded if the raw survey data are available for a complete and independent assessment of their conclusions."

Other questions remain, as well.

What is the scientific information that establishes the nature and scope of any problem? What is the scientific evidence that DOE's proposed standard would achieve its goal? We don't know.

It's goal? We don't know.

Even more troubling, DOE admits that its proposed standard will be impossible to meet for decades because the necessary water treatment technology doesn't exist.

Why should you care? Because if you use water, you will pay.

Compliance costs are conservatively estimated at more than \$1 billion a year - costs that will be paid by private industry and by the local governments that operate Washington's 500 water treatment plants.

We will all share those costs, and according to a recent study by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), we all share the responsibility. The study found trace amounts of chemicals in the Columbia River from personal care products, household chemicals and runoff from houses, yards and streets.

But despite its catastrophic cost, DOE's proposal won't do anything to reduce many of the contaminants identified in the USGS study.

Before we spend a billion dollars a year for 20 or 30 years with no assurance it will accomplish anything,



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Matthew Szelag

FYI - Article on Washington FCR in the Seattle T...

06/19/2012 12:26:40 PM

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FYI - Article on Washington FCR in the Seattle Times:

http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2018469929_eatfish20m.html

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